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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Berkeley School of Theology Celebrates 150<sup>th</sup> year in 2021**

**BERKELEY, CA (September 2, 2021)** — This year begins Berkeley School of Theology's (BST) 150th year serving God, the church, and the world offering theological education that has literally impacted thousands across the street and around the world. The Anniversary motto: ***A Faithful Presence: BST at 150*** is based upon Psalm 100:5 which says *"For God is good; whose steadfast love endures forever; whose faithfulness extends to all generations."* Psalm 100 is taken from a prayer book of a cloud of witnesses, now recited over and over some 3000 years. Psalm 100 is titled, "a Thanksgiving Song," the only psalm in the whole collection to bear this title. Psalm 100 sings of God's goodness, steadfast love, and faithful presence from generation to generation.

For BST, that faithful presence stretches back 150 years to the beginnings and even before that, when CA was still a territory of Mexico (1844). In sending Osgood Church Wheeler and Elisabeth Hamilton Wheeler to this region, who sailed from NYC by way of Panama to SF, education of indigenous and other pioneers was part of their missionary mandate from American Baptist Home Mission Society (ABHMS). Those early dreams were waylaid until 1863 when the first educational convention of the new American Baptist association was held in San Francisco. Berkeley School of Theology traces its lineage to the same visionary spirit of ABHMS that was also establishing educational institutions for men and women freed from slavery and Native Americans seeking education.

Berkeley School of Theology was chartered in 1871 as California College. The pioneering and innovative spirit of its founders has guided it through a series of transformations and name changes throughout its 150-year history. As one of California's earliest colleges, the school was first located in Vacaville and then moved to Oakland in 1887. In 1912, California College relocated to Berkeley, changing its name to Berkeley Baptist Divinity School (BBDS). Three years later this school merged with the Pacific Coast Baptist Theological Seminary, which had begun instruction in 1890 at the First Baptist Church of Oakland and had moved to Berkeley in 1904. For the next fifty-three years (1915-1968), the school carried the Berkeley Baptist Divinity School name, even as it merged once again with California Baptist Theological Seminary (CBTS) in Southern California. CBTS had been founded in 1944 at Temple Baptist Church in Los Angeles, later moving to Covina in 1951. In 1968, the new two-campus institution was renamed American Baptist Seminary of the West. Not long thereafter, the Southern California CBTS faculty joined the faculty in Berkeley (1974) where, together, they could share in the resources of the Graduate Theological Union (GTU). In December of 2019, the Board of ABSW, after a ten-year process of study and deliberation, changed the name of the institution to Berkeley School of Theology, to reflect its expansive mission.

### **About Berkeley School of Theology (BST)**

BST is one of the most interculturally diverse seminaries in the country. The core values of soul freedom, service leadership, social justice, public witness, religious liberty and the spoken and written word in

Scripture and beyond have guided and sustained this seminary for the last 150 years. For more information on all our programs, visit [bst.edu](https://www.bst.edu).

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